

## Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, November 21, 1876, with transcript

Letter from Miss Mabel Hubbard to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. PALACE HOTEL, San Francisco, Tuesday, Nov. 21, 1876. My dear Alec:

I had two letters from you yesterday, so I fear that I shall have none today.

We have had such a beautiful day, the weather was summer-like and the sky cloudless, though part of the time a mist hid the distant hills. Aunt Sophie appeared before breakfast and afterwards took us over to Oakland across the bay, to see her mother, Mrs. Hunt's place. The steamer landed us at the Overland railroad wharf which reaches a mile into the bay and the steam cars took us on through the middle of the city, stopped at a crossing, and then the tiny horse-car carried us a mile to the gate. Mrs. Hunt has such a pretty place nestling beside low hills, and with long walks lined with lovely roses now in full bloom. There is a tiny brook running through with high steep banks, shaded by thick trees and covered with exquisite ivy, the loveliest and coolest place I ever saw. Mrs. Hunt was very kind and pleasant, and after lunch Aunt Sophie took us out for a drive in her carriage. We went up over the hills past Fiedmont Fiedmont Springs, and had a perfect bird's-eye view of about the loveliest land and water I ever saw. There was the long narrow blue bay glittering in the bright noonday sun, the wooded hills and mountainous islands, surrounding and rising up in it. San Francisco in the distance spreading over it's many hills, Oakland the Cambridge of California lying below us, and over all the tender beautiful mist and pale blue sky. Oakland has a larger number of rarely pretty 2 suburban houses than any other place I know of, such neat exquisite homes surrounded by close-shaven green turf, and beautifully trimmed evergreen hedges. Returning to San Francisco Uncle Sam took us to the wharf to see the unloading of a Chinese vessel just arrived. The wharf was crowded by Chinamen and their belongings being examined by custom-house officials,

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while at the entrance patiently waiting stood a half score of pretty Chinese women. Really pretty they looked in their quaint dresses and black hair so exquisitely smooth and neatly fastened up with gorgeous gold pins. All about them was so clean their broad faces looked very pleasant. We stood inside the roped in space watching the custom officers in their work. They meant business. How the Chinese stood it all so pleasantly and without the least fuss or murmuring you would probably see among a European or American crowd. They wore the largest number of garments I ever saw, blue, green and purple quilted sacks were often worn one under the other, then a rubber or linen one, their black trousers, invariable clean white stockings and queer shoes. I know about it for the officers searched the men themselves and when done drew a long white mark on their backs. The trunks were shown no mercy, every single thing was shaken out and the whole box emptied, then the officer masked the top of the trunk and left the owners to shovel in their belongings as well as possible. All the things were so exquisitely clean I did not see a single soiled cloth anywhere. These people were all well off and brought paper pictures, firecrackers, cigarettes etc., to sale, some spoke English, almost all were good looking and so pleasant often laughing when the officer found nothing contraband after tearing open coverlids or peeping into the lining of umbrellas, 3 and even when he carried off a package or two of extra, never quarreling even when one made a present of a few packages of cigarettes, as I thought it real mean of Mr. Fox to pocket them, Sister would not take any. One gave us a few queer round things something like crackers beautifully stamped. Goodbye dear, I hope you are progressing in your work. Are your instruments not nearly ready for sale? You write to Mamma don't you, she enjoys your letters most as much as I do.

With very much love, Ever your May.